

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Chairman, I assert my right to claim the time in opposition.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania will be recognized for 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON).

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, this is a real easy amendment. This is a fun amendment at this time of night. Not much brain power is required on this one. Just a fair amendment.

If you think about it for a minute, if you listen to the rhetorical montage we have had today, you get real confused on who are the good guys and who are the bad guys, a lot of finger pointing. But one thing you conclude is soft money is bad; whether it is effective this election or after it or before, today or tomorrow, soft money is bad.

Therefore, my good friends, I would not want to see anybody build a building with this bad soft money. It would mean the building would be bad. It would mean the building would be corrupted. It would mean from the very beginning all the phone calls that were made from that building would be tainted.

Let me just say this: I want to say there are a lot of folks over there on that side of the aisle that think we do not like Democrats; and I want you to know, I like Democrats. I admire Democrats. I love the audacity of some of the Democrat Party.

There was a story of a young man who graduated from the University of Georgia, went to work for Sun Trust Bank, one of the great Georgia institutions. At the end of the first day of 8 hours, he went to the boss and said, Boss, there is an opening over at the Coca-Cola Company. I would like you to write me a letter of recommendation.

The boss looked at him and said, You are out of your mind. You just started here. This is your first day. You have barely completed 8 hours. You want me to write you a letter of recommendation?

He said, Yes. Coca-Cola doesn't have opportunities that often, and I want to go work for them. Can't you think of something good to say about me?

And the boss got a piece of paper and said, To whom it may concern: I like his nerve.

I want to say this, I like your nerve.

Let me tell my friends what is in this bill. This says you have got to get rid of all your soft money 30 days after the ban is completed or the new regulations are completed, so you have until December, except any time after the effective date the committee may spend such funds for activities which are solely to defray the cost of construction or purchase any office building.

Well, I am sure most of you do not know that is in there. As much nerve

as you have, I am sure that would embarrass some of you, so we are going to take that out with this amendment. And that is all it does, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and have him have the ability to yield that time.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, let me rise in opposition to this amendment. For I guess 10 times tonight or today we have been confronted with any manner of amendment seeking to derail the opportunity for this House to join our colleagues in the Senate and to give this President, who committed himself to be a reformer with results, an opportunity to put his signature on a campaign finance reform bill.

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We have had people come at this issue from every different conceivable direction. Now we have this final attempt. I am sure my colleague and my friend would not be willing to amend his amendment to have both parties accede ownership of any properties ever built with soft money, any television stations, any other facilities. This notion that somehow during this transition period the majority would prefer that this money be spent on campaigns attacking its members rather than to be put towards refurbishing a party headquarters; this bill allows either party to take the extra soft money, not spend it on campaigns, but to invest it in infrastructure as we move to ban it completely. It is not dissimilar to other transitions and other reform measures that we have dealt with in the past. So, Mr. Chairman, let us enjoy another what will be failed attempt to derail this House from meeting its date with destiny, and that is we will pass Shays-Meehan, and we will do it tonight.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the distinguished deputy whip.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Chairman, of course I rise in support of the amendment. I do not know why this amendment would derail the bill. The Senate I do not think had it in their bill; it was not in the original Shays-Meehan bill. In fact, under the original bill, the parties had to get rid of all soft money in their accounts beginning 30 days after enactment. This was added, I think, at a later time to really put a big loophole in this bill so that the parties could retain soft money.

Now, this does not really affect both parties the same way, because only one

party has the money in the account right now to build a building. It has already been pointed out that if this money is, in fact, corrupting, it would seem it would be corrupting for all purposes. Money that was bad to use for voter registration, money that was bad to use for party-building, money that was bad to use to turn out the vote, one would think that same money would be bad to use to build a building for one of the parties.

Now, I hope that the plan, and we have talked about this a lot today, but I hope the plan is not to take this building fund and use it to pay off hard money that might be borrowed during the campaign, the campaign we are in right now. Certainly it would be nice collateral for a loan that then one could turn around and pay off that loan. That is what at least two Commissioners of the FEC say that could be done with this building fund. Why not eliminate this building fund controversy?

This is an area where if the parties are not going to be negatively impacted by soft money, let us be aboveboard on that; let us do the same thing for all party-building, including the parties building an actual building. Let us ban soft money, let us take this out of the bill. It was not in the Senate bill. It was not in the Senate bill, and we have talked so much today about how we need to have things that are compatible. We cannot amend the bill, we cannot go to conference, we cannot do anything with this bill because the Senate needs to accept it. This is a wholly grown idea on this side of the building.

I think it ought to be eliminated from the bill. I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote for this amendment and get rid of this soft money to be used only for this one purpose, only to benefit one party.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN), one of the prime sponsors.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, here we have another amendment, it is about 10 minutes of 1:00, another attempt to try to break the fragile coalition, but let us be clear. Soft money has always been available for party-building. It has always been available for physical buildings.

Now, would not the Republicans be so lucky if we are going to enact this bill the day after the next election. Does anyone really think the parties are going to commit soft money not for television ads, but to build parties? The reality is this was put into the bill in July so that either party who had expenses relative to buildings could pay them.

Now, if this bill does not go into effect until after this election, I hardly think that it will be an advantage to either party if one of the parties keeps soft money and, rather than put them into 30-second spots, pays off a building with it.